

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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## BQ 808 – No. 31/2024

### Schirmacher takes part in the Global Christian Forum in Accra (Ghana)

(Bonn, 05.09.2024) Thomas Paul Schirmacher spoke at the Global Christian Forum (GCF) for the third time at a “Global Gathering”. The GCF takes place every six years, after Manado in Indonesia (2011) and Bogota in Colombia (2018), this time in Accra in Ghana.

Schirmacher sees the GCF as – literally – “a unique gathering of global Christian churches and organizations that brings together all the important currents of world Christianity.” He went on to say: “The GCF is an open space where all Christians can meet to promote unity by fostering mutual respect and understanding and by working together to overcome common challenges.”

In his speech on the second day of the conference, Thomas Paul Schirmacher, the outgoing General Secretary of the World Evangelical Alliance, said: “God alone knows in the end whether this or that person belongs to his family or not,” but what matters to us, he continued, “What matters to us is that we have this common faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world and that the world looks to us to see whether this faith reconciles and unites us or is a cause for division, conflict and even war.”

### Excerpts from two reports

#### Rev. Adam Russell Taylor is president of Sojourners

“During the forum, we spent a full day journeying together on a pilgrimage of lament and reconciliation to visit one of the ‘slave castles’ on the Cape Coast where millions of enslaved Africans were held before being forced onto ships and sold across the Atlantic. It was jarring to see a church built on top of the dungeon where Africans were brutalized

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Thomas Paul Schirmacher during his speech at the Global Christian Forum in Accra (Ghana) 2024 © BQ/Martin Warnecke

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– and many died – before the survivors were shipped to the Americas as slaves. Standing in a place where Christians worshipped God while unconscionable suffering took place beneath them, I was reminded how often the church has been complicit with or perpetrated evil, including the more subtle ways that the church continues to ignore grave suffering and injustice in its midst today. And yet, I was also reminded that the church played a key role in initiating a moral campaign against slavery that ultimately led to the end of the transatlantic slave trade. We ended our pilgrimage with a worship service at a nearby Methodist church nearby, where we shared prayers of lament and pledged our commitment to dismantle racism and end modern-day forms of slavery.”



Service of moaning over slavery in Cape Coast by the Global Christian Forum 2024 © BQ/Thomas Paul Schirmmacher

### Message of the Fourth Global Gathering “That the World May Know”

#### Broken in Humanity

“Nevertheless, the world will not know Christ merely by our words, but by our actions. During our time together in Ghana, we walked in the footsteps, on the sweat and blood, of millions of enslaved, dehumanised African men, women, and children at the Cape Coast Castle. We stood in the dark, stifling dungeons, spaces made more horrifying by the presence of a church directly above. Those above invoked blessings for the ships that would forcibly take the captives to the Americas, Caribbean, and Europe as objects of lucrative trade. Sadly, as we continued to share amongst ourselves, we heard stories of continuing dehumanisation across the world today. Where human beings are oppressed and marginalised, there is a failure to recognise the image and likeness of God in



The Global Christian Forum in session © BQ/Esther Schirmmacher

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one another. When we destroy creation, we dishonour the Creator. Gathering in the Wesley Cathedral, we were reminded through our worship of Christ's call for lamentation, for healing, and for reconciliation. Through the Lord, and with heart-felt repentance, we can rise out of the ashes of our brokenness with integrity, justice, and solidarity."

### Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1:** Thomas Paul Schirmmacher during his speech at the Global Christian Forum in Accra (Ghana) 2024 © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- **Photo 2:** Thomas Paul Schirmmacher during his speech at the Global Christian Forum in Accra (Ghana) 2024 © WCC/Albin Hillert
- **Photo 3 and photo 4:** Schirmmacher in conversation with Bill Wilson, President Pentecostal World Fellowship, at the GCF in Ghana 2024 © WCC/Albin Hillert
- **Photo 5 and photo 6:** Service of moaning over slavery in Cape Coast by the Global Christian Forum 2024 © BQ/Thomas Paul Schirmmacher
- **Photo 7:** The Global Christian Forum in session © BQ/Esther Schirmmacher
- **Photo 8:** Schirmmacher at the Global Christian Forum in Bogota in Colombia (2018) © WCC/Albin Hillert
- **Photo 9:** Schirmmacher at the Global Christian Forum in Manado in Indonesia (2011) © BQ/Thomas Schirmmacher
- **Message of the Fourth Global Gathering "That the World May Know":** <https://globalchristianforum.org/message-of-the-fourth-global-gathering/>, PDF: [https://www.thomasschirmmacher.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024\\_GCF\\_message.pdf](https://www.thomasschirmmacher.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/2024_GCF_message.pdf)
- **WCC: 'Global Christian Forum shares message that we will "act for the restoration of the world":** <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/global-christian-forum-shares-message-that-we-will-act-for-the-restoration-of-the-world>
- **GCF Fourth Global Gathering (GC4):** <https://globalchristianforum.org/gc4/>
- **Adam Russell Taylor: 'Amid real disagreement, Christian unity still matters':** <https://sojo.net/articles/amid-real-disagreement-christian-unity-still-matters>

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